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MYTHS--LITERATURE CURRICULUM I, TEACHER VERSION.

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PRESENTED HERE WAS A GUIDE FOR TEACHER USE IN A SEVENTH-GRADE LITERATURE CURRICULUM. BACKGROUND INFORMATION RELATED TO MYTHS OF CREATION, CHANGES IN NATURE, HEROES, AND ADVENTURE WERE PRESENTED. SUGGESTIONS FOR MOTIVATING STUDENTS WERE DISCUSSED. APPROPRIATE QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION, SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES, AND EXERCISES WERE PRESENTED WITH MYTH SUMMARIZATIONS. THE GUIDE ALSO INCLUDED SUGGESTED REFERENCES FOR SUPPLEMENTARY READING. AN ACCOMPANYING GUIDE WAS PREPARED FOR STUDENT USE (ED 010 139). (WW)

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OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

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Literature Curriculum I
Teacher Version

The project reported herein was supported through the Cooperative Research Program of the Office of Education, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

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MYTHS

Introduction

The study of myth, even more than the study of fable, reminds us of the primacy of story in understanding the universe both outside the human being and inside the depths of his mind. Whereas the fable shows a more conscious level of understanding, in that the story is translated into a clearly defined meaning or moral, the myth is to some extent untranslatable and incomprehensible. We can never put the true myth into conceptual terms that will exhaust its meaning. Hence, in the treatment of myth, the teacher has an opportunity of demonstrating that not every story has a moral to be extracted, but that the story without a moral may nevertheless have meaning for those who invented it and for those who listen to it. It should be stressed that a myth is never the work of one person but rather a story that has evolved gradually and has undergone transformations in the course of oral delivery over perhaps many centuries.

Obviously, a myth gives imaginative representation to some theme important enough to interest many people living at different periods of time. Man's place in the universe, with all that it implies, is the most general subject with which any myth is concerned. More specifically, such questions as man's origin, his desires, his fears and guilt are treated, not abstractly but concretely in the form of stories. In order to represent fully the challenges of human destiny, the personages of myth must be heroic in dimension. As for the gods and goddesses, they may be understood as signifying those forces in the universe which man is powerless to control, whether within him or outside him.

The notion of universality may be used to prepare the student for meeting Biblical stories side by side with Greek myths. These parallels need not produce a crisis of faith for the students if it is made clear that truth has many faces. At any rate, it seems necessary to show that the distinction between mythology and religion depends entirely upon the kind of belief which a body of stories exacts from a people. What was religion to the Greeks has become myth to us; what is religion to Christians will be myth to non-Christians. Whatever connotations of falsity the word "myth" has developed are owing partly to the early Christian emphasis on the truth of the gospel as compared with the lies of classical mythology, partly to scientific criteria which have substituted a new system of belief, not only for classical mythology but also for the Christian faith. But the teacher may be able to show that men have always lived by faith and that what we call facts may easily be called myths by future generations. (Illustrations might include changing notions of the place which the earth occupies in the universe) If the students can see that what myths give us is imaginative patterns for understanding ourselves and the universe, they may avoid dismissing them as untrue and hence inconsequential. If they are made aware of the particular kind of truth contained in myth (its portrayal of man's deepest instincts and needs), they should, ideally, be able

to hear such an expression as "Christian mythology" without assuming that this at once dismisses a body of belief as "only story."

In discussing the question of belief, it would be natural to touch on the distinction between myth and folk tale. While they share certain characteristics (for example, both are set in a timeless realm; both come from the shared experience of mankind), the myth is part of a system of belief, whereas the folk tale has a more isolated and limited significance. A useful way of getting at the difference might be to ask students what kinds of people are typical of folk tales such as "Cinderella" and to contrast them with the heroes of Greek mythology. As general evidence of the difference between the two, the greater seriousness, grandeur, and beauty of the myth may be contrasted with the quaintness of the folk tale. But it is worth noting that either folk tale or myth may supply the thematic pattern for a literary work, for both present a theme of fundamental human significance. Now is the time to let students see that story is one kind of thinking, pre-scientific no doubt, but not outmoded, if we can judge by the present demand for fiction of all kinds, as well as by the spontaneous appearance of stories in dreams. In fact, one of the best ways of explaining myth or folk tale to students may be to present it as a kind of public dream, a dream which many people hold in common. As a familiar example today, television Westerns may be mentioned. Perhaps the teacher will be able to have the students decide whether these Westerns are more like myths or folk tales.

Finally, to come to the question of why myths should be included in a literature curriculum, it may be stated that as works of imaginative art, myths exemplify the form-giving impulse. What literature is to more sophisticated peoples, myth is to the primitive. Thus for children, myths are possibly the most immediate way of learning how the imagination seeks to express itself in forms or patterns. But in discussing the story as a pattern of expression, the teacher should make it clear that this is not simply a round-about way of saying something that could be said more dire Because myth essentially deals with the unknown and the imperfectly understood, it has no conceptual equivalent. Even modern psychology has to borrow such myths as the story of Oedipus in order to talk about the human mind. Even irreligious people find it hard to do without the word "God," if only in the context of blasphemy. In literary terminology, we have moved from the study of fables and proverbs, which are a kind of simile, to myth, which is a kind of metaphor, a fusing of sense and spirit or the concrete and the abstract. What the fusion suggests is that analytical thinking cannot really deal with total success with the subject at issue.

To sum up:

1. Myths are not the work of one man at one time but of many men over a period of time. Oral transmission, whether by ancient minstrel,

the Norse scald, or the Indian teller of tales, causes different versions of a story and even several independent stories dealing with the same theme.

2. In the broadest sense, the subject of myth is man's attempt to understand himself in relation to the universe. Hence, the personages include heroes, who are super-men capable of representing some portion of the human destiny, and gods, who represent spiritual or psychological realities (for even nature gods and goddesses stand for the psychological impact on man of certain natural phenomena).

3. Because of the communal origin, the point of view in any myth is objective and the tone is impersonal.

4. The treatment of the theme is narrative and concrete. But unlike the fable, the myth does not have a clear moral and its meaning cannot be reduced to any abstract formula. Since the myth deals with a subjective reality that cannot be defined, it necessarily speaks in metaphorical terms.

Problems of selection and arrangement:

One problem in selecting myths for study is that they exist in many versions and many translations. After the period of oral transmission, myths were recorded by unknown or known people who may or may not have believed them. We know the names of a few: Homer and Hesiod recorded Greek myths; Ovid and Vergil gave Roman versions of the Greek originals. For the Norse we go to the Eddas, the poetic Elder Edda being the primary source. Since only scholars know Greek, Latin, and Icelandic, there is for the teacher the problem of selecting those translations that can be accepted as authentic. Some later poets and writers, for example, may have sacrificed some of the fact and impersonal tone for poetic effects. In addition, the teacher recognizes the scarcity of myths presented in a vocabulary and style suitable to the seventh grader. The problems with North American Indian legends are somewhat different but still complicated. Thanks to a number of qualified anthropologists and folklorists, the collection of these myths has been made in a scientific manner. Still, there are almost as many versions of myths on some subjects as there are tribes.

Further study of the history of myth reveals its influence on literature as well as upon the other arts. Authors such as Robert Graves, Mary Renault, and James Joyce have reinterpreted mythic archetypes in contemporary terms. And Jung, Freud, Bodkin, and a host of others have shown the truth of patterns of human behavior first recorded in mythic terms.

In the light of the influence of myth upon recent scholarhip in literature and psychology, it would seem foolish to approach the study of mythology even in junior high in the way in which textbooks have handled it--

bits and pieces of Valhalla and a single ridge of Mt. Olympus in a patched Pandora's box. What this unit proposes, therefore, is an approach that is relatively new--at least to junior-high curricula: a coherent structure of myths that is not fragmentary but instead unified. The approach is new to seventh graders, to be sure, but anyone acquainted with Frazer's Golden Bough, Bodkin's Archetypal Patterns, or Frye's Anatomy of Criticism will see that useful approaches to myths have filtered down from some of the most important theorists of our time to the school children who, in many respects, can enjoy them most.

Consequently, this unit is divided into three large groupings--myths of creation, changes in nature, and heroes and adventure. The plan cuts across geographical lines and shows the yearnings and findings of men of many times and places. At the same time, there is some necessity to differentiate between the three great bodies of myth to be covered here: Greek, Norse, and American Indian. For that reason, the first section, which deals with a myth of creation, in each of the family groups, contains an introduction to the entire family group.

How, then, will this study of myths be organized? For the development of the seventh grader, it would seem more meaningful to study the concept of certain chief themes through the stories of all three peoples, noting in particular the areas of literary study--Subject, Form, and Point of View--and then proceeding in order through the other parts. There are good reasons for this plan. It is logical and in keeping with the principles of inductive teaching: it shows that similar myths are not confined to any one people or geographical area. Students can be more easily led to meaningful generalizations about the myths as they represent increasingly more complex problems.

The teacher can motivate the students in many different ways. Through their previous reading of fairy tales, the students can be led from the once-upon-a-time stories to the in-the-beginning stories. When was the beginning? they might ask. Where did the world come from? How did the animals and people come to live here? Or will there always be natural phenomena such as the changing color of the leaves of the fall, the flight of birds to the south, a full moon, a windstorm? A local attraction such as the Oregon Caves or Mount Rainier, the names of days and months, or advertisements and art objects might have some connection with myths. If the teacher calls such things to the attention of the children, he can arouse their curiosity, and they will be ready for the imaginative treat in store for them.

The first group of myths will be Greek versions of the beginnings of man and the gods. Students should get the sense of continuity in the stages outlined in their readings--from the creation out of chaos, to the golden age, through the war in heaven to the pinnacle of the reign of Zeus. From Olympus the scene shifts--to the world of man and early heroes who, with the gods, helped make the world of man what it is. Here the myths of Prometheus, Pandora, Deucalion, Phaethon, and Heracles should be covered.

THE CREATION

Plunging right into the first myth, students should begin with "The Creation." It might be necessary to ask of the students what their ideas of the origins of the universe are--and then to see how the Greeks envisioned the formation of the world. In the first myth much happens quickly. By listing off the stages after reading the tale, however, students should see a pattern begin to emerge: first, Chaos, "the disorder of formless matter and space," in which there were the seeds of all things to be; second, Night and Erebus, "the Depth," from which came (3) Love or Eros, the greatest and most beloved of the gods; (4) three sets of beings produced by bringing Earth and Sky together--the fifty-headed and hundred-handed giants, the grotesque Cyclopes with their single wheel-like eye, and finally the Titans, not as strange as the Cyclopes, for they were manlike but huge in size. There seems to be confusion about them (perhaps because they go back further than history), but generally they are identified with nature. Only certain ones of importance need to be considered. Cronos, the victor over his father, assigned different parts of the universe to his brothers: Oceanus, who with Tethys became the progenitor of all the deities of the water: Hyperion, who with his sister-wife Thea became the progeniter of all the divinities of light, including the planets, dawn, etc.; Iapetus, who with Themis became the father of Prometheus; and Cronos himself, who with his sister-wife Rhea became the father of the Olympian gods. In the account of creation they are important in that they represent this one evolutionary step which accounts for the nature beings mentioned and also as being an earlier group of rulers over the world during the Golden Age, when everything seems to have been idyllic and when man was created.

<u>Questions for Discussion</u>

1. As you think about this story and the others you will read in this unit, remember that the gods and goddesses were not real people, but existed only in the imagination of the Greeks. We give names to hurricanes--Dora, Hazel, and other girls' names --

but the Greeks went one step further. They not only gave names to such great natural forces as wind and ocean and sun -- Aeolus, Poseidon, Apollo -- but they gave these forces human personalities as well. For them, these forces (gods and goddesses) became very real. The Greeks worshipped these deities; this was in fact their religion.

Because the names are Greek, and therefore strange to you, retell in your own words the story of how the earth came into being, taking care to pronounce the names correctly. The more you use the names, the less strange they will seem.

2. According to this story, what was the most significant stage in creation? What do you think the arrows and torch of Eros might stand for?

3. What might the first three monsters born to Gaia and Uranus represent? And the three Cyclopes? -- The huge, powerful monsters imprisoned beneath the earth might represent the terrific upheavals that accompanied the cooling of the earth and formed the mountain ranges. The Cyclopes, associated as they are with metals, might represent the heat and pressure that produced minerals underground.

4. How did Cronus help establish order on the earth? Why did he have to get rid of his father first? -- The world began to take form after Uranus left. The power was divided, so the land and oceans became separated, and the heavens distinct from the earth. This could not happen as long as Uranus controlled everything.

5. The new order was not perfect. As Uranus fled, his drops of blood turned into Furies. What do you suppose they are an attempt to explain? -- The personal tragedies that happen to men--pain, hardship, accident.

6. If we regard this ancient story as an imaginative explanation for natural phenomena, how does it compare with our modern knowledge of the history of the earth? Trace the steps in the myth from chaos to the separation of earth, sky, and sea. Is it very much like what science tells us about the history of the earth? -- There are striking similarities, which boys interested in science may be able to recognize. The long period of upheaval, before life could develop, the importance of light, and the reproductive miracle of life, as personified in Eros, nourished by the life-giving rains, all agree with our knowledge of the order in which things happened.

THE GOLDEN AGE

The next stage is an idyllic resting place between Cronos' surge to power and the war in heaven. This, the golden age, is the Greek Garden of Eden, paradise--when the world fulfilled man's wishes. The denizens of the world--animals living peaceably, man living off the untilled (or "unwounded") earth, rivers running with milk and honey--are those shared by men's common dream of earthly joy and abundance. Without seeming too irreligious the teacher might point out the many similarities between this world and the Garden of Eden: man modeled upon a divine being living off abundant nature, coupled with the eventual loss of this world.

As students answer the questions for this briefer myth, they should be led to see that the pattern here, as differing from the previous one, is one of order leading toward disorder. Part of the poignant appeal of this yearned-for world is that it is fleeting. The suggested activity should encourage them to create their own kind of dream-world, just as the ancient myth-makers did.

Questions for Discussion

1. Who created man, according to this story? What were the two features that distinguish man from the animals? Was it an accident that he was made this way?

2. Why was this period of man's life known as the Golden Age? Why could it not last?

3. Do you think such a perfect life ever existed? Does it remind you of any other story you have heard? -- Most civilizations tell of a time when life was perfect. Most students will mention the Garden of Eden, and some may have heard of the Indian stories. Encourage them to see similarities, so that they will begin to appreciate the universality of many of the myth features.

4. It must have seemed a shame to the Greeks that such perfection should be wasted. How did they ensure that the good men had not lived in vain? Does this remind you of any similar belief in any other culture? -- The spirits of the Golden Age continued to protect all good men who came after. Students may mention Oriental ancestor worship, and some may see a similarity to the idea of patron saints.

Suggestion for Composition

If you were Cronos, setting up your own paradise, what would it be like? Who would live there? What would people do all day long? What would they eat? Write a paragraph describing your golden age, or make a brief speech to the class about this subject.

WAR IN HEAVEN

After this temporary idyll, violence erupts anew as the curse of Uranus begins to take effect upon Cronos, the destroyer of his own children. Owing to the objective point of view of the teller, we do not know why he does so; perhaps students can see Cronos as a complex being: as a cruel monster--or as a being crazed by a curse. We are early introduced to a savior, though--Zeus--whose childhood is miraculous and whose first attempt to conquer his father fails. Like other heroes to come later, such as Odysseus and Aeneas, he must make a night journey to the underworld, where he gathers his forces for the final successful assault.

The form of this tale follows clearly the pattern of most mythic heroes: (1) mysterious childhood, (2) struggle, (3) descent to the underworld (what Northrop Frye calls "ritual death"), and (4) rebirth of the hero as he leads his people upward to found a new and more glorious society. This pattern is one they will meet frequently later in classical and Arthurian myth and romance.

Point of view remains objective, even for some quite brutal material, but students could face quite a challenge in attempting to determine <u>possible</u> motivation of the actors. (After all, as Edith Hamilton says, Greek gods were created in man's own image; they should operate from some semblance of human motivation, or else the stories would be meaningless). Cronos' actions are puzzling--though reasons are given; Rhea's actions as a mother are more understandable. The kindly protectors the Curetes; Metis, who might want to seek revenge upon Cronos for mysterious reasons; the peacemaker Prometheus, whose alliance with Zeus is proof of his virtue--all these could provide much heated class discussion. In stories--if not in "real life"--there is a sense of cause and effect, even if its bases are mysterious. Another puzzling point is the justice of allowing Cronos to escape. Students might ask why it was allowed--perhaps to show that Cronos, like Oedipus, was temporarily maddened. Then again it might show the mercy of Zeus, who is in Aeschylus' <u>Oresteian Trilogy</u> to be seen as both just and merciful.

<u>Questions for Discussion</u>

1. Why did Prometheus side with Zeus? Do you see any significance in the fact that Prometheus had created man? Why did Cronus have to go? -- Cronus was obstructing the evolutionary process. Change was inevitable, although he tried to prevent it. Prometheus, with his ability to see the future, knew Zeus would finally win, so he helped him. Man's progress is linked to Prometheus, so Zeus's triumph marks also a step forward for man.

2. Neither Cronus nor Zeus was powerful enough to win the war alone. Who helped Zeus to win? Why? -- Zeus won by releasing the first monstrous children of Gaia from the underworld. Natural forces again created change. The old order vanished, Atlas alone of the Titans remained to hold up the sky, and a new order was established under Zeus, more complex than before.

3. What human characteristics are given to the gods in this story? -- These deities have all the common faults of humans--jealousy, hate, pride, revenge, desire for power, even bickering.

4. Can you explain the gifts the Cyclopes gave to Hades, Poseidon, and Zeus? -- The new order established by Zeus divided the power somewhat differently than it had been under Cronus. The thunderbolt made Zeus the most powerful of the gods, although not supremely powerful. The Trident gave Poseidon power over the sea, while the gift of invisibility gives mystery to the unseen power hidden underground.

5. If we continue to read these stories as explanations of natural phenomena, what might the war in Heaven represent? Have you heard of a similar story from another source?--There is a parallel story in the Bible that explains how Satan was driven from heaven when he and his angels fought against Michael and his angels. This Greek story could also be an explanation of how evil forces were routed, leaving room for Zeus and his followers, who are remarkably like human beings. On the other hand it might simply mark a further stage in the evolution of the world, a period accompanied by tremendous earth-shaking violence; volcanic eruptions on the earth, and electrical storms in the heavens.

6. What have you noticed about the way these stories have been told? A great deal of violence and bloodshed has been recorded. Has the writer passed any judgment? Has he given any opinions? Does this kind of writing remind you of any other literature you have studied this year? What does it tell you about the origins of these stories? -- Help the students to see that the impartial telling of events, without comment or judgment, is typical of folk literature. They first encountered it in the traditional ballads, where the listener is left to do his own interpreting. Remind them of the term, third-person detached or impersonal.

7. There seems to be an inevitability about everything that happens, and no amount of scheming on the part of the gods can prevent things from happening once the course has been set. For instance, Zeus had to win the war, but what previous action made this necessary? Can you see a pattern of order, one event making another inevitable, or is it just luck? Discuss this idea.

THE REIGN OF ZEUS

After the decisive war in heaven, the rightful monarch, Zeus, came to power. A somewhat mysterious quantity while winning the throne, once enthroned, Zeus becomes a wise ruler, one whose rightness is shown by the cooperation of nature and of the other gods. Some significant characteristics of his reign are the following: (1) the establishment of order (one of the basic Greek conceptions) in the division of the rule according to the three great parts of the universe; (2) the beginning of the four seasons; (3) the tilling of the soil and the beginning of agriculture; (4) the gods controlling the natural world; (5) the nature of the gods, immortal, capable of faults like those of men, jealous of their power but finally subservient to the will of Zeus, who in turn had no control over the Fates or the prophecy that he would be superseded by one who was to come after him. They communicated their will through oracles and signs, accepted worship in sacrifices and rituals; they were cruel and deceitful toward those who thwarted their will. But the reign of Zeus is in a sense open-ended since it was not completed and, of course, never will be: Greek and Roman mythology as a cult ended with the coming of the Christian era, but many of its characteristics have been incorporated into literature, religion, and psychology since.

This passage serves chiefly as an introduction to the residents of Mt. Olympus--with brief tales and descriptions by way of introduction.

Questions for Discussion

Have you ever been invited to a large party while you were visiting in a strange city? Could you remember who everybody was, and get their relationships straight? Perhaps you feel equally bewildered after this introduction to the gods on Mount Olympus. The following questions are simply to help you get to know the gods better and feel at home with them.

1. Zeus, of course was the most powerful god on Mount Olympus. Who shared the power with him to rule the sea and the underworld?

2. Who was the queen of the gods? What was she like?

3. What was strange about the birth of Athene? What was she like?

4. Who was Hephaestus?

5. Old King Solomon was said to have had a thousand wives. We don't know how many Zeus had, but Hera, the queen, was obviously not his only wife. Who were the twin children of Zeus and Leto?

6. Who was Hermes, and what was his job?

7. Who was the goddess of love and beauty? Who was her husband?

8. Who was the god of war?

9. Who was the nicest of the gods and goddesses? What was her relationship to Zeus?

10. Zeus had yet another sister, besides Hera and Hestia. Who was she? Who was her daughter?

11. Which god had a mortal mother?

12. What was different about Pan?

Suggested Exercise

Make a "family tree" of the gods to help you keep them straight. You could make a small one for your notebook, or a large one for the bulletin board. Find out more about one of the gods or goddesses, and report your findings to the class. If several people each prepare a report, the class will learn quite a lot about several of the gods.

THE SILVER AGE

Why did Zeus order the men of the Silver Age to be destroyed? Have you heard of any other story telling about the whole world being covered by flood waters? Was the same reason given for he destruction of men? Did the men in this story have cause to complain? Do people today feel they are being punished for wrong doing when a natural catastrophe strikes them?

THE GODS THEMSELVES

Writing Assignment

In many respects, the gods resembled men, although they differed from men in some important ways. Write a few paragraphs explaining the role the gods played in the lives of the ancient Greeks. Describe the way they lived and behaved, and why they were important in the lives of ordinary people. Do you think the people behaved better then they would have if they had not been conscious of the nearness of the gods?

PROMETHEUS BRINGS FIRE TO MAN

This version of the Prometheus myth follows the form of a short story; all the characters have motives (men, poverty; Prometheus, generosity and compassion; Zeus, cruelty? fear of being replaced?). The hero faces the issues, makes a decision, finds a way to carry it out, accomplishes his objective--

and, unfortunately, suff ers for it. Thus a pattern of cause and effect, rise and fall, appears in this version of the myth. Questions here should make the students think about conditions and motives of the cha racters; suggested activities encourage library exploration.

Questions for Discussion

1. What geographical changes had taken place in the world since the reign of Cronus? How did these changes affect the lives of men?

2. Why did men complain and feel bitter about the gods? Was it just because of the hardships of life, or was there another, more important reason? -- They felt they did not need the gods since they were smart enough to solve their own problems.

3. Why was Prometheus so interested in men? Why did he try to persuade Zeus to help them? -- Prometheus had created men and therefore loved them. He wanted them to grow in knowledge and to develop the potential god-like qualities they had been endowed with. Remember, he made man in the likeness of the gods.

4. Was Zeus a just ruler? What was his attitude towards men? -- Zeus represents absolute power, demanding only obedience in response.

5. Why was the secret of fire so jealously guarded by the gods? -- The knowledge of fire represented power to forge weapons and tools.

6. How did Athena help Prometheus? Why do you suppose she and Prometheus were such good friends? -- Both were creative gods who liked to watch their gifts develop.

7. Every story has a beginning, middle, and end. What would you say make up the three parts in this story?

8. In this story Zeus is the "bad guy" and Prometheus the "good guy." How does the author choose details that help you know this?

9. In this myth the author made Prometheus a symbol of something very desirable. As you remember, a symbol is a person or an object that stands for an idea. What do you think Prometheus might symbolize? What does "promethean" mean? -- This might be difficult for some students to understand at this time, but a guided discussion about creativity, and man's steady increase of knowledge that has helped him to better his lot on earth and leave him less at the mercy of the powerful elements (Zeus?) might open up a little the scope of the Prometheus myth.

THE PUNISHMENT OF PROMETHEUS

Although Zeus could chain Prometheus and cause him great suff ering, he could not destroy him. In what way was Prometheus more powerful than Zeus? How do you explain it? Discuss other examples you know of when naked pow er was helpless against the stronger force of love.'

Suggested Activities

1. In order to understand why men became "rebels and grumblers," obtain further information about many changes which occurred during the three ages of men on earth.

2. For a highly imaginative story about Prometheus, read "Paradise of Children" in Tanglewood Tales by Nathaniel Hawthorne. Tell it to the class; or work up a skit and act it out in front of the class.

For Composition

Prometheus gave man the secret of fire. Today man has unlocked the secret of the sun and possesses the power of nuclear energy. Was Zeus right? Has man now become as powerful as the gods? Imagine Hermes has just hurried into the dining room of the gods on Mount Olympus to bring news of the explosion of the first atomic bomb. What will Zeus say? Will Prometheus still say he is right? Let your imagination have free rein, and write an account of the reaction of the gods to the news.

PANDORA'S BOX

On the human level, as well as the divine, the cyclic pattern repeats itself. The Golden Age of both gods and men cannot last; the chest containing woes is always opened. This story has definite connections with the previous tale of Prometheus; Zeus' anger causes him to seek revenge.

This tale deals with both concrete--creation of woman--and abstract--the woes and hatred erupting from the container; the point of view is objective still; the form follows a perceivable plan. Causes are three in number--Zeus' anger, Epimetheus' foolishness, Pandora's curiosity--and each diminishes in intensity as the story progresses. It is thus ironic that the final act of opening should be by a frail woman. The turning point is thus the actual lifting of the lid, and the denouement the rushing forth of the forces of evil. However, the denouement is double-edged; along with the stench of evil is the presence of hope.

Here a comparison between this story and that of Adam and Eve might be fruitful. Students might see that behind both simple acts--opening a lid, eating an apple--is a chain of deadly serious forces. They might see also that such myths explain the presence

of evil, but also contain the seeds of possible optimism-hope for Pandora, the fortunate fall for Adam and Eve.

Questions here should lead to better comprehension of the facts of the tale, to comparison with a similar tale among the gods, and to some interpretation of the characters and of form.

Questions for Discussion

1. If Zeus wanted to punish men for accepting fire from Prometheus, why did he not strike them with his lightning bolts? What was to be gained by having Pandora release the evil?

2. Whose fault was it that Pandora opened the box? Is Epimetheus to be blamed at all?

3. Why had Prometheus put hope in the chest along with all the terrible evils? What knowledge of the future of man does this imply? Did this ruin Zeus's revenge? Explain.

4. A writer uses a definite pattern for the organization of his ideas in telling a story. The simple plan used in "Pandora's Box" has three parts: the why or cause of what happens, the details of "what happens," and the "how were things changed" or the effect. Can you find these three parts of the story?

5. Does the writer of the story blame Pandora for opening the box? Does he blame Zeus? Does he think men deserved what they got? Do you know at all what he thinks?

6. What natural phenomena does this myth attempt to explain?

DEUCALION AND THE FLOOD

This tale contains the pattern of error, punishment, and redemption on the human scale that we have seen so far operating with the gods. The sinful acts of the children of the giants called down upon them the wrath of Zeus who, temporarily forsaking the method of fire, enlists Poseidon's aid to destroy the earth by a tumultuous flood. Here again, a remnant--the children of the ever-helpful and compassionate Prometheus--survives. Deucalion and Pyrrha live because of their goodness and foresight. And they engage in an act at once symbolic and literal. The riddle of the great mother becomes the means by which they repopulate the earth.

Here students should see the pattern of cause and effect, justice and mercy. To show the similarity of man's myth--making powers the story of Noah might be read to them. Here again the same pattern of error, punishment, and redemption applies; certain motifs--chest-ark, mountaintop--appear in both.

Questions for Discussion

1. Does this story remind you of another? How did Deucalion and Pyrrha resemble Noah and his wife? Why did Zeus decide to spare them?

2. Why did Zeus decide to destroy men for the third time? Why did he use water instead of fire?

3. Was there ever a time when much of the earth was covered by water? What do scientists know about it? Find out what you can from your library, and see if there is an explanation for what happened.

4. Do you suppose the new race of people were any improvement on the old? Give reasons for your answer.

5. How had Prometheus saved mankind again? Why do you think he keeps on giving man another chance?

PHAETHON

The story of Phaethon is a study in both comparison and contrast with the former. It no doubt comes closer to the experience of the students in the willfulness of the boy, his ambition, his desire to emulate his father, his pride in his own "grown-up-ness" than does the story of the flood. The events key up the reader to the imaginative quality of the story, encourage sympathy for the frightened Phaethon, and create sorrow over his death. But there is also a greater sense of everyday reality, which can be seen in the natural phenomena: the daily course of the sun, the cause of chasms in the earth, barren mountain tops, deserts, the drying up of the Nile, etc. Also, there is the sense of an era's end: Zeus relents, Phaethon dies and is buried.

Though a story simple to "get at," this tale suggests a number of complex issues. We sympathize with Phaethon, the bright lad eager to know who his father is; we admire his courage in searching for that father and even understand his rash desire to drive his father's chariot. But his actions, though meant to cause no harm, are, ironically enough, terribly destructive. The wildly careening chariot and the rebellious horses cause cataclysmic changes. And for his folly Phaethon himself is punished by death. The sorrow of his death is mitigated, however, by the care his body receives at the hands of the nymphs.

Questions for Discussion

1. What kind of a boy was Phaethon? Can you think of a proverb that illustrates his action? -- Pride goeth before a fall.

2. Why could Helius not prevent the boy from going to his destruction? Should he have broken his oath? What would have happened if Zeus had not thrown his thunderbolt at the boy?

3. Zeus had tried to destroy men so often before; why did he save them this time? -- This catastrophe would have destroyed the earth itself. It was only man he wished to punish. He did not want to destroy the whole world.

4. The ancient Greeks believed the world to be flat and round like a plate. To explain the fact that the sun rose in the east every day after they had seen it set in the west, they told the story of Helius driving his chariot across the sky every day, then taking a boat around the edge of the world at night. What unusual occurrence do you think might account for this story about Phaethon?

5. Were there any clues in the story that led you to think Phaethon would die? What were they? Did he choose his own destiny, or was it forced on him?

HERACLES

Not all of the myths of the Greeks arose out of the desire to explain questions for which they had no answers. The Greeks were a highly imaginative people who loved to tell stories, and some of the fanciful tales they told had no teaching purpose at all but were simply entertaining. They told stories about the daring deeds of their ancestors, whom they made sons of various gods and goddesses, and called them heroes. One of the favorite heroes was Heracles.

Questions for Discussion

1. How did the Greeks account for the great strength of Heracles? What other trait did he inherit from his father?

2. Why was Hera jealous of Alcmena? Is this the way you would expect a goddess to behave? How did she try to destroy Heracles?

3. The beginning of this story is quite long. What useful purpose does it fulfill?

4. What does the middle part of the story consist of? Would all this be told at one time? Could other episodes be included? Does this remind you of a popular form of entertainment today? -- Television serial Westerns--Bonanza, for example.

5. How did the story end? Was it the kind of ending you expected?

6. Do you suppose the Greeks believed every word of these stories? What was the purpose of the exaggeration? You will remember Mark Twain used exaggeration in the essay about the ants that you read earlier in the year. What was Twain's purpose? Can you think of a popular form of modern entertainment that uses exaggeration for humor? -- Seventh grade students have probably never stopped to think very much about the question of a writer's purpose, and

it may be necessary to lead them into an understanding of imaginative writing. Today's children tend to be very literal-minded, having been brought up on a steady diet of factual literature, scientific and realistic, whose purpose is to instruct. They are less at home with the fairy tales and myths than the children of earlier generations. Help them to understand the exaggeration that makes the hero larger than life--superman--and compare this kind of exaggeration (the TV Western) with the exaggeration used for humor (the cartoon).

7. These stories of Heracles all tell about the wonderful strength of this popular hero. What other subjects do they deal with on the deeper level of ideas? -- It might be a good idea to remind the students of the ballads which, while they told a story about people, also talked about abstract things such as courage, death, love, etc. It is important to build up the understanding that a piece of literature means more than shows on the surface.

8. Why do you suppose Heracles was made a god after his death? Can you think of other examples of heroes who have become "immortalized," if not worshipped? -- As stories are told about great men, they tend to become less and less human and more mythical. Abraham Lincoln, Davey Crockett, Daniel Boone, George Washington, are all examples of this process. Most of the world's religions also worship as gods men who were beloved teachers in their earthly life. It seems to be a human need to regard as immortal the spiritual qualities that lift men above the animals. Prometheus created man in the form of the gods.

9. Are these stories about Heracles written in the same impersonal style as the creation myths, or do you know how the teller of the story feels about certain of the characters? -- All of the stories are told in such a way that the hero is made to stand out above all other men. This is biased writing, and the students should be aware of the difference.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Some of these books will be in your school library. Your librarian might also have other books not listed here. If you have trouble finding enough supplementary reading, show this list to your librarian and suggest that some of them could be bought for the school library.

GREEK GODS AND HEROES by Robert Graves, Doubleday and Co., N. Y., 1960.

STORIES OF THE GODS AND HEROES by Sally Benson, The Dial Press, N. Y., 1940.

HEROES OF GREECE AND TROY by Roger L. Green, Henry Z. Walck Inc., N. Y., 1961.

THE GORGON'S HEAD by Ian Serriallier, Henry Z. Walck Inc., N. Y., 1962.

WORDS FROM THE MYTHS by Isaac Asimov, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1961.

THE GOLDEN FLEECE by John Gunther, Random House, N. Y., 1959.

THE GOLDEN FLEECE AND THE HEROES WHO LIVED BEFORE ACHILLES by Padraic Colum, The Macmillan Co., 1959.

MYTHS AND ENCHANTMENT TALES by Margaret Evans Price, Rand McNally Co., 1960.

ADVENTURES WITH THE GODS by Catharine F. Sellew, Little, Brown & Co., Boston, 1945.

CLASSICAL MYTHS THAT LIVE TODAY by Frances E. Sabin, Silver Burdett Co., 1958.

THE HEROES by Charles Kingsley, The Macmillan Co., N. Y., 1954.

TANGLEWOOD TALES by Nathaniel Hawthorne

SUGGESTED EXERCISES AND ACTIVITIES

1. The Greek myths are more than fairy tales and adventure stories. They have become part of our culture. The Greeks themselves named the stars and planets after characters in the myths, and we have kept those names. Make a list of some of these names, and find out a little about the character each represents.

2. Scientific language has been influenced by the Greeks. The space program especially has relied upon the Greek myths to provide names for the rockets and missiles that will probe the mysteries of outer space. Find out the names given to these machines, and tell who was the original holder of the name.

3. In ancient Greece, a religion grew up around the myths, and the literature of the age was filled with it. See what you can find out about the religious observances of the Greeks, and prepare a report for the class.

4. The Olympic Games are an international athletic contest held every year. Find out about the origins of the tradition, and prepare a report for the class.

5. My Fair Lady is a popular musical show based on an old Greek myth called Pygmalion. Read the original story, and explain how

the idea was used to create the show. Can you find any other examples in literature, music, or drama where the idea was borrowed from the Greeks?

6. Producers of goods or services often take their trade marks from mythology. A glance through the yellow pages of the phone book will supply some--flowers by wire, for example, or Mobil gasoline. Find as many as you can, and explain what each name or symbol stands for, and why it is appropriate to the thing advertised.

7. What is a myth? Is there more than one kind of myth? Now that you have read several myths, write a brief definition and explain the purposes of the Greek myths.

8. Write a myth of your own. It can be an entertaining one, like the Heracles stories, to show how brave, or clever, or powerful a hero was. You may make up your own characters, and they may be as fantastic as you like to make them. Or, if you prefer, write a myth to explain some puzzling circumstance; what is a rainbow? why does a peacock have such beautiful feathers? what is thunder? where do the birds go in winter? You may choose any natural phenomenon as your subject, and give an imaginative explanation.

9. The ancient Greeks regarded fire as the most important step forward in their civilization, and therefore honored Prometheus who gave the gift to them. What modern discovery do you think has furthered the advance of civilization to an equal extent? Which one of the gods might have been responsible for giving this gift to man? Write a story about how the gift was given, and what the reaction of the gods on Mount Olympus might have been.

10. Select several stories to read from a supplementary source. Choose one that appeals to you, and re-tell it to the class in a way that will make it interesting to them.

REVIEW

Before going on to a study of Norse myths it might be a good idea to review briefly some of the conceptions about the Greek myths. Without doing anything so obvious as listing the following points on the blackboard, the teacher might make sure that the students are aware of the following generalizations:

1. The universe as the Greeks thought of it was made up of three parts: earth, sky or heavens, and water, each of which was to be ruled by a deity.

2. All things have come from Mother Earth and from the Sky that has watered the earth.

3. The basic elements of nature as they were manifest to the

Greek world are accounted for, and are in keeping with the idea that myths are the result of a people's imagination working upon their own place and experience.

4. Advanced students might comprehend the thought that the basic emotional forces of the "spiritual man" were present in the universe from the beginning.

5. There were many gods and goddesses, each with a primary concern and a specific symbol of powers.

6. These gods were immortal and had power greater than men, but they were not faultless.

7. In the story of creation there is a progression from the abstract to the specific at the same time as there is a decreasing scale in size of beings in an inverted pyramid order.

8. The gods were jealous of their power, and if they became angry, they could and would punish men.

9. Man was created lesser than the gods but higher than the animals because he was given the power to think and to feel--spirit as well as sense.

10. One of the greatest gifts to man was fire, which he could use in making a good life for himself.

11. Because the gods were displeased with men, they made them work, sent troubles into the world, but also gave them hope so that they could survive in spite of woes.

12. Even though the gods did become angry, they did not wish to destroy mankind but instead created a new race.

About myth as literature, students can now make generalizations, also.

1. Literature is about both the concrete and the abstract.

2. Some stories are about real things and people, and some are imaginary. (Let the students list things in the stories that are impossible but seem as if they could be real, as we read fairy tales.)

3. Myth is a kind of story made up in the imagination of early people that satisfied their questions about the origin of things, the natural phenomena around them, and themselves.

The extensive list of suggested activities appended to the students' version would provide a means of "fixing" certain details and conceptions in their minds. Furthermore, a number of exercises would help them see that many mythic patterns are still alive. Most of the suggested activities could be worked up from provided material, either in the anthology or in the study questions; some would require original work. For those assignments demanding outside material, the bibliography at the end of the unit can be of help.

NORSE MYTHS

INTRODUCTION

In many respects the second great body of myths, the Norse, resembles the Greek myths just completed. Chaos is like the freezing waters of Ymer; the Hydra and other monstrous beasts the Greek heroes slew are comparable to the Norse Fenris Wolf and others like him. Both Norse and Greek gods were created in human shape.

Yet there are significant differences. The harsh world of the Northland and the harsh people which it helped form have given rise to a highly individual body of myths. The mist-shrouded world of Asgard was a world of continual strife, not sunshine, as on Mt. Olympus. Only rarely did light break through the darkness; goodness and evil were at constant odds; cold prevailed. Occasionally a kind of grim humor would glimmer through, but in general the gods fought giants, mysterious natural forces, and, sometimes, each other in their brief days upon earth.

How do man and his gods confront this alien world? By courage, primarily, by loving with great joy the few moments of warmth allowed them in this brief and cold existence. And the myths reflect this strong sense of clash.

Where did we get these myths? Many think the first collector was Saemund the Wise, who lived in Iceland from 1056 to 1133 A. D. His collection was called the Poetic Edda. Expanding upon this text is the Prose Edda, written about a hundred years later by Snorri Sturluson, another famous Icelander. He supplied many details which the poetry took for granted.

In this brief study of Norse myths, much the same pattern as for the Greek myths will be followed: a general introduction, then a series of myths of creation and of the Norse world, followed by a series of review questions so that students can see similarities and differences.

Despite some handicaps, motivating the study of Norse mythology should be easier than arousing interest in the classical. Handicaps might include the difficult names, pronunciation, and spelling as well as a tendency on the students' part to look upon these myths as a continuation of the classical. But some things will make the work easier: the stories are generally less complicated; there are fewer gods to learn; and the children have already been introduced to the conception of creation myths. How does the teacher begin? Certainly arousing the curiosity of the

students comes first by questioning the origin of matters not taken up in the study of classical myths, perhaps referring to names of the days, relating to cosmic events in Arctic regions, or the rising of a new volcanic island in the waters near Iceland.

In the students' introduction appears a brief description of the origins of the Norse world. There the students will be introduced to the beginnings in a kind of chaos, to the giant Ymer, and to the workings of Odin and his brothers. In ensuing tales they will meet not just concrete happenings but also intangibles. The blending of good and evil in the universe is imaged in the person of Loki, the brother of the gods, who was deceptively beautiful but evil. Evil begets evil: Loki's offspring, the Fenris Wolf, encircles the earth and will at the end destroy Odin and the creation with terrifying fire and ice. But out of this destruction is to arise a new world and race of men. They will become the special care of Odin, the All-Father. The men are to be great warriors, and war is to be their work and their pleasure.

From the stories, then, students can gather the following conceptions:

1. Myths as imaginative stories created by a people out of their experience to satisy their curiosity about the world and themselves reflect strongly the natural world in which they live.

2. The Norse creation came from a source different from the Greek Mother Earth: Norse creation came from the body of a giant, which appeared from the mists created by fire and ice.

3. Some of the gods preceded the universe.

4. They created a tri-part universe, each part being distinct but joined with the other two by the roots of the tree of life. At the roots were to be found justice, wisdom and understanding, and evil.

5. One of the three gods was destined to be supreme, the All-Father of gods and men.

6. The first people were made from trees and were to live fruitfully on the earth and to be the special care of the All-Father.

7. The men were to be warrior heroes, engaging in great adventures and battles. Inherent in this idea is the symbol of their continuous struggle for existence, physically in a rugged world and spiritually in a world of good and evil.

8. There was to be a final battle in which the gods and the world would be destroyed by fire and ice, but from which would rise a new world and race.

9. The spirit of gods and men knows wonder and terror, but it also recognizes a stern acceptance of fate.

10. These myths seem to reflect the later age in which they were recorded, especially in the great moral struggle and the prophecy, but they are essentially myths and legends and not allegory.

Thus these stories, like the myths of the Greeks and the Romans, blend both sense and spirit, the concrete and the abstract.

In form, generally speaking, these myths follow the same principles as do the earlier myths. They too were oral and anonymous at first, but they are recorded in a different way, in the two Eddas. The Elder Edda is in poetry and the Younger Edda in prose; the two styles lend themselves to comparison, even though they must be considered together for the whole account. In the later book the story is told as a dialogue between an imaginary questioner and Odin in three different manifestations. In some ways this method keeps the characteristics of oral telling. In style, these myths are more direct and tighter than the classical.

The other characteristics of form that were discussed in the study of the classical myths are valid here too and do not need to be repeated. They include the use of indefinite time and place, exaggeration, foreshadowing by means of prophecies, movement of the action by use of disguise. Likewise in diction there is the same use of conventional phrases and graphic language. Throughout there are figures of speech.

In point of view, there is the same third-person-omniscient telling. Even in the dialogue versions, the same point of view is kept. Although there is no direct expression of moral judgment, there is, nevertheless, the tone of sterness and awareness of the struggle in life that is inescapable. These myths certainly reflect the view of life that man is in conflict with the natural world and the gods and that life holds adventure, courage, and hope.

Students' questions deal with comprehension of details as well as comparisons with Greek myths previously covered.

II. "Hymer's Caldron"

This tale deals with the gods' setting their house in order- - in this instance, seeing to the domestic detail of a kettle to brew mead. The action is easily followed: The motive for the action comes from the desire of the gods to build a banqueting hall by the ocean. To this proposal Aegir,

the sea god, objects, since he considers it an invasion upon his territory. Although Odin reminds him that he is all-powerful, the All-father offers to appease him with a gift. In his cunning the sea god requests that which he thinks the gods cannot supply. But when Tyr recalls the presence of the requested caldron in the huge dwelling of the frost-giant Hymer, it is Thor who promptly offers to go with him to procure the caldron. When they arrive, Hymer is away fishing, but his wife extends hospitality to the gods. When Hymer returns he is angry, but since the guests have already been received according to the code of hospitality, he must accept them. He does so grudgingly and is somewhat appeased when Thor makes a bargain with him, the achievement of which involves a test of strength. Here Thor reveals his courage and is led to insult Hymer with the remark, "All giants are cowards at heart." When the boorish giant interferes and robs Thor of success, Thor in turn is angry, and to appease him, the giant offers a gift. Thus Thor by cleverness, strength, and bravery--by brain and brawn--wins the test and the kettle.

The abstract subjects are quite apparent: the continuous conflict between the gods and the giants, and between good and evil. But there are other notions within the grasp of the students: the sacred obligation of hospitality, the gods as possessing power over the elements, keeping peace by appeasement and gift-giving, the lack of morality as a guiding principle in one's actions and replacing it with cleverness and courage. Not to be overlooked are also the love of an active life and adventure, the desire to be heroic. Perhaps these reflect the rigorous life in the cold northland and serve to remind the reader that the victory is only temporary.

The form of the story follows the progress of the scenes: (1) the misty headlands of Aegir, providing the prologue for the events; (2) Asgard, the court, from which are sent out the gods seeking for the caldron; (3) the nightmarish stretches of Giantland; (4) the land of Hymer, where the agreement is made; (5) the sea, where the crucial events occur; (6) the hall where the final test results in victory for Thor because of the deception of Hymer's wife; and (7) back again at the completed hall at Asgard, with the promise of future battles to come. Often if students can map out the stages of a journey they can see how scene enforces form. Here the pattern is the familiar "there and back again" common to romance and myth; the crucial battle takes place on the sea.

Other devices appear here, as well: the plot is manipulated by such devices as making and carrying out agreements, the requesting and giving of gifts. The conventional setting is Giantland, since it is the gods who take the offensive. Exaggeration--the house of Hymer, the whales caught in the fishing, the fire of twenty whole trees--builds up fear. The similes, the use of color, and the graphic language are imaginative. There is contrast in the beauty of Hymer's wife and especially in the twist (turning the tables) in the plot.

III. "The Fenris Wolf"

Just as the Greek myths concern themselves with evil creatures, so too do the Norse have myths dealing with the controlling of destructive forces. Such a myth is "The Fenris Wold," a tale about a dreadful Wolf, the son of the devilish Loki.

This story about Tyr, the bravest god of all, also introduces the readers to Thor and Loki. The concrete subject is, of course, the brave act of Tyr in sacrificing his right hand in the defense of his fellow gods from the Fenris Wolf, the offspring of Loki. It is a simply told tale of how the gods, fearing the dreadful beast with the yawning maw, trick him into submitting to chains so that the gods need fear him no more as he assumes greater strength and fierceness. Abstract subjects include the gods' recognition of their inability to tame him, that is, to live without fear of the power of evil, the attempt to overcome their enemy by strategy and cunning, if not by strength, the power of the supernatural, and finally the heroism of sacrificing self for the welfare of others. The reader is reminded at the end of this that it is only a partial victory, since the wolf will enter the final battle and will devour Odin, the god of all. This prophecy is paralleled by the one that the world serpent will destroy Thor. But for the students it is a truly heroic story of courage, man's power in mind and cunning, and the hidden force of the supernatural.

The tri-part form of the story builds by a pattern of increasing intensity to the final binding. Point of view is objective. However, there is little question how the author feels about the events and the characters: vivid verbs (howled, bristled) help create the character of the wolf; reported action (placing his hand inside the mouth) shows Tyr's bravery. Choice of adjectives (monstrous, grisly) and other kinds of words help us see and feel the events.

IV. "Thor and the Giant King" (optional)

Like the Greek gods, the Norse divinities were not all-powerful. Such a conception is embodied in the story of "Thor and the Giant King," which presents a questioning and foreboding test of the power of gods in the universal struggle against the supernatural, almost overwelming, powers of evil and pride. Thor and Loki go to earth and assume the size of men but retain their divine powers. But in a wager to test the strength of the gods, they are first reduced almost to the position of "little" men, but at the end since they have performed well, even though they have not been entirely successful, they are restored to the position of heroes and gods. At the beginning Thor is identified with the peasants whose special protector he was. He accepts the worship of Thjalfe and his parents in their hospitality and in the son's becoming his servant. But the real test takes place in Giantland, where they are challenged and made to experience human deception and fear as a result of their bragging.

Concrete and abstract subjects are very closely woven together. Some are found in the personifications of fire in Loge, with whom Loki is in competition, and of thought in Hugo, with whom Thjalfe races. Thor struggles valiantly against the sea, the world serpent personified or deceptively symbolized in the cat he cannot lift, and old age with whom he wrestles in the form of Elle. These embody magic and illusion: things are not alway what they seem to be. In the explanation of the contest, when Thor is assured that he is not humbled but heroic in his attempts, there is the thought that true glory is not always recognized.

The form of the story is more complex than in previous myths, since it involves greater length, shifting of scenes, a wager and challange of strength, and an almost riddle-like pattern in the solution. Beautifully constructed, it takes place in three major scenes of action: the peasant's cottage, where Thor and Loki show their supernatural power; "on the road, where they first take shelter in the giant's glove and are soon to be bested by the giant himself; the palace of the giant, where they are downed several times. Each builds toward the next: their success at the peasant's cottage points toward their final success; their failure to keep up with the giant points toward their apparent failure at the palace.

A variety of other esthetic devices appears here as well. Contrast is seen in the peasants and the gods and humorously between the intended and the actual effect of Thor's hammer blows. Foreshadowing runs throughout the myth and students' attention should be directed to the use of these clues to the divine nature of the travelers and to future events: the killing and the magic restoration of the goats, the failure of Thjalfe and Loki to meet the test prior to Thor's failure. But the greatest is in foretelling the continued and the final struggle in which Thor will again meet the world serpent. There is a recurrent use of such expressions as three people, Thor's whirling the hammer three times; three tests for Thor, three strides for the giant. The dialogue is vivid and strongly indicative of the nature of the speaker. There is a constant reference to nature that underscores the cosmic quality in the myth. Repeated use of such terms as King's citadel, locked gate, wager, wrestled, weapon underscores the underlying metaphor of battle and war.

There is an interesting point of view here. Externally it follows the usual pattern, but in its deeper sense there is a shifting point of view revealed in the attitude of the various conflicting forces in the story. At the beginning Thor expresses the view of the gods; the peasants, the view of man toward the gods. Later, Thor in the guise of a man takes up the view of man toward life and himself, and finally Utgard-Loke proclaims the unrelenting power of evil when he speaks as the voice at the end and declares to Thor's remark, "Should I meet you some time by chance, beware!" that "I will not leave that to chance."

V. "Baldur, the Beautiful" (optional)

In "Baldur, the Beautiful" the students will recognize that the subject is the tragic death of Baldur and the unsuccessful attempt to ransom him from the goddess Hel. But it cannot be left with this, for the manner of his death is significant. Even though as a god he should have been immortal, he was not because evil had come into the world. Since Baldur was beautiful and loved by all, it was by the hatred of one alone that he was killed in spite of the efforts of his parents, Odin and Frigga, to spare him. It is also significant that the death blow should have been struck by his brother who in his blindness did not understand that he was being betrayed by the evil Loki, who hated Baldur. Perhaps the students can be led to explain why he dies in this way. This part of the story is climaxed by the ceremonial burial of the god. The second part is the story of Odin's attempt and failure to ransom Baldur from the grim goddess Hel. Again the plan is destroyed by the evil Loki, who has assumed the guise of an old hag. Why should he choose this form when in real life he was handsome

Certainly to find the abstract subjects that are inter-woven in the story, the students must recognize that Baldur was the god of the sun, the source of warmth and life. To this fact they should relate the cooperation of nature in sparing him harm and later mourning over his death. There is also the foreboding of death and universal destruction because of the hatred and evil which man in his blindness is ironically not able to see. But there is also hope, since it is told that Baldur will rise again to live in a new world.

From a literary viewpoint this myth is rich in material for discussion. Several devices are used to move the plot and to give atmosphere and form to the story. There is at the first the long eerie journey of Odin to the prophetess to learn why Baldur is being haunted by Hel in his dreams. Then there is the fulfillment of the dream in the death of Baldur. The journey idea is introduced again in the ceremonial death of Baldur, who sails away on a Viking ship while the funeral pyre burns (the destruction by fire and water), and there is finally the uniting of all the creation-sky, sea, and land-in a cosmic grief and destruction. The teacher should help the students to understand these commonly used devices by asking why the myth is told in this way. In spite of the highly imaginative quality of the story, the structure is evident even to seventh-graders. At first they may encounter difficulty with the long introduction composed of Odin's visit to the prophetess, but the other two parts should be easily recognizable. The conclusion they will find, since, introduced by thus, it gives a summary. The study of vocabulary might give emphasis to the choice of words to create the mood. Why not supplement this work by calling attention to the images which give a certain sense of reality to highly imaginative matter, such as the source of dreams and Hermond's trip to Hel on Odin's swift horse?

VI. "The Twilight of the Gods!"

After the evil deeds performed by Loki and after the death of Baldur, the sun god, it is inevitable that the much foretold Day of Doom should be approaching. The account of this is told in the last story "The Twilight of the Gods." It is an account of a battle that is both awesome and terrifying, but exciting. Perhaps it is best to begin with the overall structure. First there are the signs of its coming, all in series of three's: the winters of the Winter Winds, the Sword, and the Wolf. And during this time the powers of evil make ready. Then there is the triple signal: the crowing of the cocks stir all to battle. There follows the noise of the gathering as the forces of Jotunheim and Mupelheim take up their places. Then the champions of Valhalla are summoned by the horn of Heimdall. All is in readiness, and Odin seeks the advice of Mimir on the place to take his stand. By now the riders of Muspelheim with their fires reach Bifrost, but do not enter. The world serpent floods the lands and mankind is destroyed. It is now a battle between the gods and the evil powers. On the waters come the two ships of the evil forces, steered by the giant Hymer and Loki, with whom is the Fenris Wolf. Now is the second part of the struggle, and the opponents line up against each other. Most are killed, and fire is spread over the land. The world tree Yggdrasil is destroyed, and then in turn the sun, the moon, and the stars, until nothing remains except darkness. Then as the waters withdraw there appear a new heaven and a new earth. On the earth appear a man and a woman saved from the fire to inhabit the world, and in the heavens on the high peaks the gods take their places.

But there are abstract subjects too that have been overlooked so far. What makes the battle heroic? One must go back to the words of Odin to the gods and the champions before the battle: "We will give our lives and let our world be destroyed, but we will battle so that these evil powers will not live after us...." In them there is a "holy" or heroic cause for which they are willing to sacrifice themselves, even as the epic hero does. There is also courage, that most universal of all ideals. And in the appearance of the new world and of the first couple to inhabit it, there is hope. Finally, there is the fulfillment of prophecy, and the reader is left with a sense of finality, for the whole story has been completed.

More advanced students and those with highly developed imaginations will enjoy lining up the forces of battle. They can check these with the prophecies. They will recall from the story of creation the different properties or symbols of each. They will also like to show the new universe with the gods and the younger gods, the first people of the new world, etc. Perhaps some will like to list the use of three's here and throughout the whole of Norse mythology. Others might enjoy tracing the things that were left from the earlier creation, such as Thor's hammer to show that the gods are still the protectors of mankind, and the golden runes of Odin. What is the meaning of the new heavens above Asgard? Perhaps this is a good place for the teacher to read to the class Robert Frost's "Fire and Ice."

In spite of the complexity of this account, there is a recognizable ordering of events. Perhaps the students will need the teacher's help with this. Also the teacher should point out the order of things destroyed. Perhaps this should be compared or contrasted with the ordering of events in creation. Finally by checking up on the clues to this destruction, the class can be led to see that the prophecy has formed a frame around all the stories.

INDIAN MYTHS

Introduction

For obvious reasons little time has been assigned to the myths of the North American Indians. They are so numerous that it is impossible to include or even to remember all, but more significantly they have had little effect upon the white man's culture, and allusions to them are rare except in local writing. But they should be included because they serve several purposes: When students realize that myths are native to their own locality, they will better understand the universality of myths and myth-making. Also, since these myths have not gone through the refining process of great writers such as those of the ancients and the Old Norse, they are primitive and will help young readers to know that myths, being very old, belong to a time when there was less scientific knowledge of the outside world. These versions show that myths are primarily oral and in the original versions had little artistic finish. Furthermore, these stories should arouse students' interest in their own localities--the history, geography, natural surroundings, and earlier inhabitants. But since the purpose is not to study sociology or anthropology but to study literature, it is hoped that these have value in sharpening the sense perceptions and imaginations of the group. Besides, they are entertaining. Since the myths are recorded in very simple language, it is not necessary to consider tracking except to say that more able readers should again be encouraged to read widely and enter into creative activities.

Authorities tell us that the Indians had three purposes in relating their myths: to instruct, explain, entertain. During the long winter evenings as the people sat around their fires, some older member of the tribe would tell the tribal tales, sometimes speaking in English, at other times chanting or singling in an Indian language or nonsense syllables. The story is no mere interpretation of the events; it is often almost a one-man play, with the story teller playing the roles of the characters he speaks of.

The myths of instruction consist of lessons in history, geography, nature study, and ethics, but through an art form, in the same way that much lore is contained in Norse sagas and carved upon totem poles. One has but to travel with a copy of the myths to find those natural landmarks

which have been mythologized in the mountains, rivers, lakes, waterfalls, and rock formations. Closely allied to these stories are the myths explaining natural phenomena such as the seasons and cycles of day and night, stars, tides, volcanoes, petrified forests, the various types of vegetation, and the form and nature of the animals. As for ethics one notices that in the myths wrongdoers are consistently punished, sometimes even by death, although they are quickly returned to life in a new form but with the same potential for making the same mistakes. What were the wrongs? Violating any of the taboos was wrong, but some of the more serious were greediness, selfishness, boastfulness, stupidity, disobedience, and cowardice.

There is another kind of instruction included, that of teaching the crafts and skills necessary for daily living. These were sometimes given by the men when the arts of producing fire by friction, making weapons, and hunting were men's tasks, but for the most part it was the women who gave instruction to the girls of the tribe as they taught them the preparation of skins, grinding the grain and acorns, weaving, and beadwork. These may be classified as culture myths.

In form the myths are loosely put together and often left without an ending. They seem to ramble on, piling up details in a way suggestive of the novel as opposed to the short story. The language is exceedingly simple. The short statements remind one of the "kernel" sentences described in the language curriculum. But there are some distinct characteristics of style. Much ritualistic formula is present, and the language takes on a rhythmic repetition or chant. Students might make up chants based upon the rituals of the preparing of food, the war dance as in "How Beaver Stole Fire from Heaven," and the wailing for the dead as in "Chief Joseph's Story of Wallowa Lake." Others might like to write a prayer asking the gods for rain or sunshine. There is much appeal to the senses in the graphic language and sound effects such as alliteration and onomatopoeia, but little metaphor or simile. Personification is constant in portraying the animals and phenomena of nature, perhaps inevitably since the Indians believed that spirits were present in all things.

In point of view one notices a change from that used heretofore. Although the legends are told in the third-person omniscient manner, they are less objective and more moralistic in that they constantly uphold the culture of the group. On the other hand, trickery and deceit are frequent, and the spirits seem to be motivated by whim rather than justice or moral precept.

Because of the students' familiarity with the myths of creation and the qualities to be noted in their reading as well as for the reasons stated above, analysis of these stories should be easier than at the beginning. There should be careful direction of the reading. There are seemingly endless accounts of the creation, but those selected should be grouped together as one reading assignment.

The Indian creation stories follow the idea of a creator, variously called "the Creator," "Old-One," "Madumda," etc. Sometimes he worked alone and sometimes he was helped by animal spirits. The students must understand that most of the Indians believed that before man was created there was a world of "animal people," hugh in size and possessing human qualities of speech, judgment, and the like, but shaped like animals. They could remove their furs as if they were jackets. They lived like human beings. The greatest of these spirits was usually Coyote, but in the Northwest it was sometimes Raven or Mink, Beaver, Eagle, or others.

I. "The Beginning of the Skagit World"

The parallels between this myth and those already studied are so obvious that it seems almost unnecessary to repeat them. There is the decision to make the world, the act of naming, the division into realms, the flood, the making of people from the earth itself. Unlike the Greek or Norse picture, however, this one seems to follow a rather aimless, rambling pattern: one thing happens, but it does not necessarily cause the next event to happen. We do not have the emotional motivation that we find in the actions of Zeus, for example. This story is rather neatly divided into two sections: the first, dealing with the plans of the Creator and the "People," Raven, Mink, and Coyote. They are responsible for the natural phenomena, the trees, soil, water. It is the water that then provides a transition to the second half. The flood covered everything but two mountains (why, we do not know, although there is a mysterious suggestion, dealing with peoples' talking to trees). The lonely Doquebuth then becomes the new father, the new creator. Like Prometheus, he undergoes a period of suffering, for "No one can get spirit power unless he is clean." Working with the Old Creator, he feeds and populates the world after the flood. However, this tale is open-ended: still more changes will come to the world.

II. "How Coyote Made the Columbia River"

The second myth of creation deals with yet another of the creators, Coyote, who made the Columbia River by digging a long ditch between the ocean and the lake where his people lived. Once that was done, the needed salmon could swim up to his people, even though the rocks fell into the water a short time later. This myth explains a geological fact which the early Indians must have puzzled over; it might be fruitful to compare Coyote with other heroes who accomplished great deeds for their people (Prometheus, for example) and with later folk-heroes like Pecos Bill and Paul Bunyan, whose exploits are similar. Students here might see a change in connotation: once a hero, a coyote is now regarded as something of a pest on the open range.

III. "The Bridge of the Gods"

Much like the Greek myth of the Golden Age, this myth deals with the loss of a happy age; like the Christian Garden of Eden, the loss was caused by man's own error. The story tends to fall into three major sections: first, that dealing with the two quarreling brothers, whose difference is healed by the decision of the Great Spirit to let them have the territory they want by shooting an arrow. To show the state of peace now arrived at, the Great Spirit built a bridge over the river. Students can possibly see that this bridge is both literal and metaphorical in that arguments have actually been bridged.

But, again, the people break out into quarrels. This time the Great Spirit punished them by keeping the sun from shining. And the people's penitence causes the Great Spirit to promise Loo-wit youth and beauty if she will allow them to have part of her fire. But this, too, sets in motion another chain of troubles, this time ended only with their transformation into mountains.

This longer, more elaborate tale follows the prescription necessary for a short one better than the preceding. There is a definite series of causes and discernible effects; the story has definite sections, each related to the other; it has a definite sense of beginning, middle, and end; we are not left with a sense of incompleteness. And, like all myths of explanation, it gives reasons for the appearance of actual things which we can see in traveling around the Pacific Northwest.

IV. How the People Got the Sun"

This is a tale of jealousy, conquest, and justice--but in charmingly naive and quite unheroic terms. The outing that the animals make when they shoot the arrow ladder toward the sun seems more like a Sunday picnic than a Promethean deed; the sun itself seems reduced in scale. The man who had the sun is fooled--but he does not seem to suffer very much; after all, he does have lackamas to eat; as for the results. Snail may lose an eye, but the Beaver becomes a constellation. The two-part structure of the tale is, like its tone, childlike and simple. There is a reason for the attempt; by foolery, they succeed in their attempt to get the Sun.

V. "How Coyote Brought Fire to the People"

The next two are companion pieces, both dealing with heroes who gave fire to their people. The first, dealing with Coyote, is a tale of simplicity and suspense. The originating motive is clear: the people are cold and hungry because the cruel skookums will let them have no fire. But the three crafty skookums are outwitted by the three sisters of Coyote, who live in his stomach in the form of huckleberries.

Once he follows the plan, Coyote and the Helpers begin the suspense ful relay. At times the reader thinks the skookums will win; we are relieved to find, though, that the last coal is given to wood. And at last coyote is still the hero: he knows how to make fire from wood.

Characterization is limited here, as in the other Indian tales. Coyote, though, rises above being a mere stock character; he is knowing and strong, but something of a vain thief of other's ideas: he takes credit for his sisters' plan. The form of the story is simple--plans and execution of plans provide the basic pattern. The point of view is objective.

VI. "How Beaver Stole the Fire"

A similar pattern of plot is found in this myth, in which after a series of attempts and exhibitions of cleverness, the people get their needed fire and store it in wood. Because the story is longer, the people themselves are characterized more clearly; the greater length allows for a more extensive (if not more complex plot. We have two important scenes preparing for the assault upon the heavens for fire: first, the song contest, where the tiny Mr. Bat is the winner; we then have the shooting of arrows, where Mr. Chickadee demonstrates the greatest skill of all. After this preparation, the clever Eagle and Beaver outwit the human beings and manage to steal the fire. The teller carefully prolongs suspense so that there is a final twist to the plot before the people find fire underneath Beaver's fingernails.

The characters here are more clearly drawn than in the previous tale, owing to the greater length and greater care in giving to the characters recognizable human qualities: the gluttonous Grizzly Bear, the quietly modest Mr. Chickadee, the wily Beaver. The point of view is objective, but there is unmistakable weighting of the characters. We know how the author feels toward the people he places in his story.

VII. "Mt. Shasta and the Great Flood"

This story bears many resemblances to the Biblical tale of Noah and the Ark--the flooding water, the safe haven, in this story atop the mountain where the people remain before coming down to repopulate the world. A different kind of cause appears in this one, however; instead of the unquestionable sinful race in the Bible, here it is the earth, with its "evil spirit" that is opposed to Coyote. And Coyote is not bad so much as he is shrewd.

Though short, the story has a clear pattern: beginning, the struggle between the evil spirit and the Coyote; middle, lighting the fire and the exile on top of the mountain; end, the repopulation. The point of view is objective, even barren. We do not really know why the evil spirit treated Coyote so cruelly; all that we know is that it happened.

We include in this Teacher Version the questions that appear in the Student Versions. Since there are so many questions, and since the answers to them are immediately obvious to anyone who has read the myths and taught the unit, we have not suggested answers.

NORSE MYTHOLOGY

Study Questions: Hymer's Cauldron

1. Who was Tyr? What suggestions did he offer to Odin? Who volunteered to accompany him? Why?

2. Where was Hymer's home? As you read the description of the god's trip to Giant-land, trace their course on the map of the universe.

3. Hymer was fishing, so his wife gave hospitality to the "lords of the earth." What advice did Hymer's wife give the gods?

4. Hymer was angry when he returned. Why did he grudgingly accept his guests? What bargain did Thor make with Hymer to appease his anger?

5. Describe the fishing trip. Was Thor correct when he said, "All giants are cowards at heart?" How did Hymer prevent Thor from proving his strength? What gift did he offer to Thor to appease him?

6. How did Hymer's wife "turn the tables" on her husband?

7. Does this story prove the giant was or was not courageous? Give reasons for your own opinion.

8. What characteristics did Thor possess that helped him win the test and the caldron?

9. The ending of the story is humorous. Can you think of a proverb that would explain the story in a few words?

10. What incidents in the story keep it moving to the end? Discuss the struggle for power between the gods and giants.

11. What reasons can you give for the inclusion of the last few sentences after the conclusion of the story? Would the story have been complete without them?

12. How many sections is this story divided into? How does it "build" to the conclusion?

13. What would you say is the teller's feeling about Thor? Does he like him? Or does he think he is a bit too proud? Prove your ideas with concrete examples from the story.

Suggested Activities

1. There are many conflicts between gods and giants and good and evil. Write a paragraph stating reasons for these conflicts. Try to decide whether the conflicts could have been solved by appeasement.

2. Statements that go beyond the truth are called exaggerations. How heavy was Thor's hammer? How large was Hymer's house? How wide were the stone pillars? Find other examples of exaggeration. Why does the author use exaggerations? How do these statements make you feel?

3. To help you see and feel the danger in the boat, the teller uses particular groups of words to create pictures in your mind or appeal to your senses. For example, "he would sink like lead," and "the boat whirled like a stone on a string." In these descriptions the author has used a figure of speech called a simile, which states a comparison by the use of the word "like." In other similes the comparison is expressed by the use of as, than, similar to, or resembles. Discuss other similes found in the story.

4. Color words such as "the red-eyed goats," "blue cold sky," "red and blue fish," and "white frost giant" appeal to the sense of sight. How do they make you see the events of the story?

5. In order to express his thoughts the teller needs a large number of words as well as the knowledge of their meanings and uses. Many words in this story have been borrowed from other languages. Which languages contributed these words to our vocabulary? What do they mean?

thither	rent	turf	vent
chariot	tread	threshold	pillar
lest		reared	

Study Questions: The Fenris Wolf

1. Loki married a giant. Describe his three evil offspring. What was their relationship to the universe?

2. How did the gods attempt to control Loki's son, Fenris Wolf? In what ways did Fenris put an end to their attempt? Which one of the gods dared go near him?

3. When the gods realized the superior strength and cunning of Fenris, they sought the aid of the supernatural. What people were asked to aid Odin? How was the enchanted rope made? Why did Fenris submit to the trickery? What hostage did he demand? Why?

4. Who was the hero of the story? According to the Norse mythology, a hero is one who resists evil though he faces defeat. How did Tyr show that these words fitted him? What actions and words does the author choose to make us see that Tyr is a hero?

5. The Fates indicate before what would occur in the "last days." Read the last three lines of the story. Why was Odin's victory only a partial one? Which triumphed in the end, good or evil?

Suggested Activities

1. Notice that Fenris Wolf was given an action you associate with a person. When an author gives these human actions to animals, he is using personification. What human action did Fenris Wolf possess? What lifelike qualities did he use?

2. Prepare a sheet of paper for the writing of two lists. Head the first list "Exaggerations" and the second, "Imagery--Color and Motion." Read your story again and find words that will fit into one of these lists.

3. The story follows the three-part arrangement of a short story, beginning, middle, and end. Write sentences summarizing each of the three parts. Consider whether or not the last three sentences should have been omitted.

4. Words or phrases such as "Thor the smith" or "Loki the fire god" are used to describe characteristics of a person or a thing. These expressions are called epithets. Can you make up some epithets to describe persons or things around the school?

Study Questions: "Thor and the Giant-King"

1. Why did Thor and Loki stop at the farmhouse? What kind of reception awaited them at the "peasant's rude cottage"? How were they treated when they asked for food and shelter? What details showed the peasant's poverty?

2. The peasant said, "We are no lords that we should eat meat every day." How did Thor provide meat for supper? What did Thor command the peasants to do with the skins and bones of the goat? Why did Thjalfe feel he had to serve Thor?

3. Where did they travel the next day? What awakened them in the middle of the night?

4. How was the size of the giant shown? Can you suggest a meaning for the snoring of the giant? How did the earth answer?

5. When the giant said, "that tickled," how did you know the author meant to be funny rather than serious? Sometimes the elements of surprise and exaggeration are introduced to produce humor. Which elements were used? Give other examples included in the story.

6. Describe in your own words the tests in which Thor, Loki, and Thjalfe took part when they reached giantland. Why had the king kept them without food and sleep? Each test added another challenge. How did Thor act about his inability to meet the challenge? What was the lesson he had to learn?

7. Did Thor and Loki have the wrong impression of Utgard-Loke? What had he wanted to prove to them? Why is it unwise to make judgments without a great deal of thought?

8. At the end of the story, Thor forgot his promise to the giant. What did he attempt in his anger? Describe the miraculous change which took place. Tell what you think the "voice" predicted with the words "I will not leave that to chance--farewell."

Suggested Activities

1. What ideas does this myth give you about the life, customs, and beliefs of the peasants? Of the Gods?

2. Many words in the story pertain to supernatural powers and wisdom. Make a list of these words and phrases and explain what each means.

3. In describing the contest between Loki and fire, the author talks about fire as if it were a person. This figure of speech is called personficiation; it gives to non-human things the form and qualities of human beings. What human qualities were given to the fire? To thought? Old age?

4. What do you think the author is foreshadowing (giving you clues to future events) by these words, "cast all the bones in these skins and be careful to break none?" What statements foreshadowed the nature of the travelers; the failure of Loki and Thjalfe to meet the test; the continual battle between giants and gods?

   In your reading you must be alert to everything the author tells you, for an apparently unimportant incident might foreshadow a coming event, or indicate that something is to happen later.

5. The author told the story in a way that revealed the attitude of the various conflicting forces. What was Thor's outlook on life at the beginning? the peasants? How did his view change when he assumed the guise of a man? What did Utgard-Loke proclaim when he spoke as voice at the end?

6. Thor had many more adventures. You will find them in some of the textbooks at the end of the myths. Prepare to tell a myth to the class.

7. Invent another adventure of Thor's. Imitate the form of one of the myths. Use personification, metaphors and exaggeration to make your myth interesting. Read or tell it to the class. You and some of your classmates might act it out as a skit in front of the class.

Study Questions: Baldur the Beautiful

1. Since evil dreams had given forewarning of danger to Baldur's life, Odin rode down to the underworld. Why was he so worried?

2. What preparations were being made in Hel's kingdom? Did Hel willingly grant his request? Why did the happiness of Asgard depend on Baldur?

3. Frigga, the mother goddess, wanted to prevent Baldur's death. How did nature help to spare him harm? Later, how did nature mourn over his death?

4. Loki's hatred for Baldur grew when he realized that all nature had sworn an oath to protect Baldur. What dastardly and cunning plot evolved in his mind? Did Frigga betray Baldur? Why was the information she told Loki so important?

5. In many respects Hoder is a very appealing character. Why? Notice how the author carefully creates sympathy for him with comments such as "stood sadly aside from the rest" and "for he was blind." Why are you prepared for Loki's action? How would you describe Hoder's thoughts and feelings when he realizes Baldur is dead? Discuss the way the people reacted to Hoder.

6. Baldur was buried gloriously and sent to the kingdom of Hel. What did Odin mean by "We will not despair"? What were his plans? Why was Hermond chosen to help? What message was he to deliver to Hel?

7. When Hermond reached the palace, the mood of the story changed. How did the author establish the feeling of gloom and despair? Notice the words he used to describe the palace--"yawning doors," "vast and gray," and "fire burned chilly blue." What expressions were used to describe Hel? How had Baldur changed? Is this mood found in any other Norse myths? Give details.

8. What meaning did Baldur have in mind when he said, "when the Day of Doom and Destruction has passed over the earth, I shall arise to behold a new and more beautiful world"? Read the last paragraph of the story.

9. All creation, the sky, sea, and land, united in grief over the death of Baldur. Again Odin attempted to ransom Baldur from the goddess Hel. Who was responsible for the failure of his plan? What disguise did the character put on? Why should he have chosen this form when in real life he was handsome?

10. The idea of fate, or destiny appears in many myths,. Even though as a god Baldur should have been immortal, he died. How did destiny determine Baldur's doom? Why was he entirely blameless? How did Baldur's death affect the people on earth? Explain the meaning of "victory is possible in death and courage is never defeated."

Suggested Activities

1. An author uses different devices to move the plot and to create atmosphere. Did you notice how many journeys were described? What were they? Why did the teller select the order that he did?
2. The story of Baldur is divided into two divisions. What is the climax of the first part? The second part? Would you consider either division an individual story? Why or why not?
3. What images give a certain sense of reality to this highly imaginative story?
4. Which to you, was the point at which you began to know what the ending was? Why?
5. The ancient people wanted to explain the changes from summer to winter. What did Baldur represent? Hoder? The death of Baldur?
6. At what point in the story might each of these words be used to describe Odin's feelings: discouraged, mournful, commanding, determined, saddened, hopeful?

7. In this story how did the author help you know and understand about the characters? Was it from a description of his appearance? Was it from an account of his deeds? Did you learn most of it from what he said and what he thought or did? Discuss your answers. State in two or three sentences what you think made Baldur a great man.

Study Questions: The Twilight of the Gods

1. What signs foretold the coming of the Day of Doom? How long did the Fimbul Winter period last? Describe the changes which took place during the "Winter Winds," the "Winter of Swords" and the "Winter of the Wolf." How did man's attitude alter? (toward his brother)

2. Can you imagine the setting? Where was the final battle to be fought? Describe the mustering together of the forces. Line the forces up on a paper, listing the leaders for the giants and gods. Who were the leaders? What plans were made to destroy the gods? What did Bifrost symbolize? Why did it break under the "riders of Muspelheim?"

3. "Then was heard the laughter of Loki." Why did Loki laugh? Which forces did he join? Explain his feeling for the gods. Look through the stories and find statements that foretold his actions in this final struggle.

4. What was the order in which things were destroyed? Compare or contrast this with the ordering of events in creation.

5. Trace the things that were left from the earlier creation. What did they symbolize? What is the meaning of the new heaven above Asgard?

6. The good deeds men do help others for many years. In what way did the death of the gods aid the race of people? Baldur? Hoder? the sons of Thor and Odin?

7. At the end of the story the mood changes. "Two of human kind were left." Peace had been restored. What does this change in mood add to the story? What effect does it have upon you as a reader of the story?

8. Notice the title of the myth. Do you think it is appropriate? What words would you substitute for "twilight" without changing the meaning of the title?

Suggested Activities

1. What are some of the most important influences in the life of the gods? Which characters in this story were affected by these influences? In what way?

2. One explanation of heroism is the desire to perform a brave or noble deed. Do you think this might explain the willingness of the gods to give their lives? Describe the situation. What might have happened if the gods had destroyed the evil powers? What kind of people are remembered in history? What important persons are often forgotten?

3. Before an author begins writing, he plans an interesting way of presenting his story. If it is a sad story, he selects words that appeal to the emotions. Examples here are "could hardly keep alive," and "brother fell on brother." Find other groups of words which give you a feeling of sadness.

4. Which of the following happenings made you feel most strongly: the death of Odin; the death of Thor; the death of Loki; the death of Tyr? Why? Write a paragraph explaining your answer.

5. The myths were told by an omniscient narrator or one who knows all things. Where did the events take place? On what scale? Were his personal feelings reflected in the selections you have read?

VIII. Review: Classical and Norse Mythology

With many primitive people there is always a similarity among the nature of the country, the character of the people, and their beliefs. There is also a distinction between the Greek and Norse mythology. Review the myths you have read.

1. What is the distinction between the classical and Norse mythology?

   a. Creation of the world
      Describe the process of creation
      How was the universe divided?
      Who ruled the different realms of the universe?
      What powers were given to these rulers?

   b. The gods and goddesses
      Name the important gods and goddesses.
      Describe their homes and appearance.
      What were their special powers?
      How did the men regard their gods?

c. Creation of Man
Why was man created?
Who created him?
What qualities were given to him?
What was his purpose in life?

d. Sin and Evil
In the beginning man was innocent and good. Who brought evil to man?
How was he punished?
What was the meaning of hope to man?

e. Destruction of the Earth
What conditions existed on earth between god and man.
What elements of nature were used to destroy the human race?
How was the earth repopulated?
Why was the new race to be worthier of life?

2. Many myths you have read are called "explanatory myths" because they explain something that happens in nature; how, for instance, thunder and lightening are caused. Which stories would you classify as explanatory myths?

3. The theories about why some myths have appeared in different countries of the world are interesting to pursue. What are some of the principal theories? Which theory would you accept? Why?

4. Can you write a definition for the word"myth?" Write the definition after you have answered these questions.

What kind of people were these inventors and tellers of the Norse myths?
Who were the scalds?
Did they speak for themselves or for all?
What kind of questions did these primitive people in the cold Northland want answered?
How were their ideas influenced by the world they lived in?

5. In Norse mythology there are many interesting stories connected with the creation of the world. Try your hand at making up a myth about one of the following subjects in a way that a Norse scald might have told it.

The Fog-Country and the Fire-World
Heaven and Earth
Day and Night
Sun and Moon
Wind and Rainbow
Dwarfs and Elves
The World-Tree and the Norns

6. Norse mythology was transmitted by means of Runes, Skaldic poems, the Eddas, and the Sagas. Find out more about these in the Reader's Encyclopedia or in a book on mythology. Write a brief descriptive paragraph explaining the contribution each made to mythology.

10. Your parents or grandparent may know several legends and myths which have been handed down in your families for several generations Write one in your own words.

INDIAN MYTHOLOGY

Study Questions: The Beginning of the Skagit World

1. Who was the Old Creator? What decisions were made by the Creator and his animal helpers? Tell of his plans for human beings.
2. How was the earth divided? What was the purpose of each division?
3. What led to a change on earth?
4. When the people saw the change coming, what did they decide to do? Who survived?
5. After the flood, the new Creator was born. How did he obtain his spirit power? Was there a combination of function of the Old with the New?
6. When the Old Creator appeared in a dream, what orders did the blanket represent? What was the order of creation?
7. Why are there different races of people speaking different languages on the earth?
8. Explain the prophecy made by the people created after the flood. Has this come to pass?
9. The myth seems to follow the pattern of the Biblical account of creation. Could this mean that the myth originated after the Indians experienced Christianity? Did Christianity influence any creation myths?
10. What are some of the similarities between this myth of creation and the Greek and Norse accounts?
11. How many sections are there in this story?

12. What is the "turning point" here? What caused it?

13. Why was it necessary for Doquebuth to suffer? Can you think of another creator who underwent a similar experience?

14. Does the author tell the reader whether to like or dislike the characters? How does he seem to view his characters?

Study Questions: How the Coyote Made the Columbia River

1. What plans did Coyote make to provide food for his people?
2. How was the Columbia made?
3. Is there any evidence that the story was based on geological facts?
4. Why would you consider this story an introduction to "The Bridge of the Gods?"

Study Questions: The Bridge of the Gods

1. What led to the quarrel between the two brothers? Where were the brothers taken by the Great Spirit? Tell what happened to them on the high mountains.
2. Why did the Great Spirit think the brothers would live in peace? What promise did he make them?
3. "The people were at peace for many snows ' for a time. Wickedness began to influence men. How did the Spirit punish them this time?
4. Who brought the Spirit's gift to the people? What was her task? Again the people were at peace.
5. What finally made the Great Spirit change his mind about helping the people? How did he punish the two chiefs? Are they still quarrelling?
6. Why is the Columbia narrow and the water swift at The Dalles?
7. Does Loo-wit still retain her youth and beauty? Name other myths in which the idea of eternal youth recurred.
8. If you were to plot out a play based on this tale, how would you divide the story? What settings would you need?
9. Discuss what caused each of the characters to act as they did. Can you understand why?

Study Questions: How the People Got the Sun

1. The animals were worried. What had man done to disturb the people?
2. Wren decided to "shoot a ladder to the sky." Who was called on to help the Wren?
3. How did they accomplish their tasks? Why did Robin get his breast burned?
4. What mistake was made by "the man who had the sun?" Where was the sun placed?
5. The eagle was anxious to make a slave of Snail? Hadn't Snail helped rescue the Sun? Why is he blind today? Do you feel Eagle was fair to the Snail?
6. Several people remained with the man in the sky. What occurred? Look at the sky some evening. Can you see any resemblance between the constellations and the animals they are supposed to represent?
7. Who were the "people" in the myth?
8. What is the beginning of this story? Is there any reason for the information that gets the action going?
9. What is the turning point?
10. Did you expect the results?
11. Is this a serious or happy story? A tale about stealing the sun is very heroic, isn't it? Is this one? What material from the story would you use to prove your ideas?

Study Questions: How Coyote Brought Fire to the People
How Beaver Stole the Fire

1. As you read compare the incidents and characters from these selections with those from Prometheus. To understand the similarities and differences you must read the important details carefully. Outline the development of the plot in each story showing similarities and plot differences.
2. Which did you like better from the point of view of the story, characters, and setting? Why?

Study Questions: Mt. Shasta and the Great Flood

1. Coyote was the shrewdest and most powerful of all the animals. What lines in the story show his shrewdness? Did he kill the evil spirit?

2. How did the evil spirit seek to wipe out the race of animal people?

3. Account for the use of fire.

4. The animals possessed several human qualities. What were they?

5. List the animals mentioned. Are these animals found around Mt. Shasta?

6. How was the earth repopulated?

7. What are the main parts of this story?

8. Does the teller seem to favor the Evil Spirit or Coyote?

Suggested Activities for Indian Myths

1. In many Indian myths the animals are the people. They have human characteristics; they talk, argue, seek revenge, and do other human things. On a sheet of paper write the names of these animal characters: Coyote, Raven, Bear, Mr. Eagle, Mouse. Reread the stories. List examples of human behavior. Are the animals ever shown as they would be in real life?

2. Indians are said to have acted out some of their myths. These dramatizations had a beginning, middle, and end. The myths were presented as a chant or a song. Listeners were expected to respond with some exclamation at intervals while the story was being told. Prepare a myth to be given orally to the class. Follow the pattern mentioned above and include rhythmical repetition of the phrases and sentences.

3. The story tellers used to pantomime actions and incidents in a myth. They used their hands, arms, head, and body to tell a myth. Plan a pantomime and present it to the class.

4. In what ways are the myths "why" stories? What phenomena of nature are explained in the Indian myths you have read?

5. In what ways are the spirits and animal people in the myths different from the magicians and fairies of fairy tales? Do they both teach a lesson? What do they attempt to explain?

6. Read the three myths of creation in the supplementary section. Compare these to "The Beginning of the Skagit World." How do they resemble each other?

7. In myths the same plot ideas are repeated. The search for fire occurs in "How Coyote Brought Fire to the People" and "How Beaver Stole the Fire." How is the plot varied? Can you find other points of similarity in the Indian myths?

8. Many names for places in the Pacific Northwest are of Indian origin. Look at a map of this region. Make a list of the mountains, rivers, lakes and cities, that have Indian names. What is the meaning of each name? Reference: Webster's Geographical Dictionary.

9. The English language has borrowed many words from the Indians; for example wigwam, cayuse, and moccasin. What do these words mean? What do these words tell you about the life of the Indians?

10. One transformation myth explains how Wyeast and Klickitat were changed into mountains. Write an original transformation myth to explain a geographical feature of your region.